

The Work Session of the Finance/Executive Committee of the Atlanta City Council regarding a New Stadium was held Wednesday, February 27, 2013, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, City Hall South, 2nd Floor.

Present: Councilmember Felicia A. Moore, Chair Jim Beard, CFO
 Councilmember Yolanda Adrean Departmental Staff
 Councilmember Keisha Lance Bottoms
 Councilmember H. Lamar Willis
 Councilmember Michael Julian Bond
 Councilmember Kwanza Hall
 Councilmember Cleta Winslow

Chairperson Moore stated that we would give the public an opportunity to speak to the new stadium.

The Honorable Andrew Young: Former Mayor stated that he is glad to be here at this public hearing. Everything that has happened in this town has been controversial. When the airport was built, he spoke about the T-Terminal (International Terminal) being built, the people said that it was not needed and they even did a feasibility study stating that it was not needed. There will always be naysayers. If you look at the Dome, it represents a community and everyone prospers. Everybody that flew in at the airport spent money. We are always on the edge and worrying about the future. Instead of having the future shape us, we should shape the future. We are blessed to have a foundation and owner who wants to enhance the City. No one cares about how much the airport costs because we have bonds to pay off the debt. There is \$20 trillion dollars waiting for businesses. In the 8 years he was Mayor, the City brought in 1100 businesses. We are just beginning to be the great international City. We always had the support of a visionary City Council. He got a call from a friend asking if we are going to build the new stadium. The progression of this City is what we are voting on.

Mr. Scott Moran: stated that he is a special agent for an insurance company. He attended Notre Dame College. For the past fifteen years, he has stayed in Atlanta. He has counseled many soccer teams. We need this stadium to be part of the soccer franchise. A new retractable stadium needs to be built. Soccer is the sport of the present. He wholeheartedly supports the stadium.

Mr. Joe Stalls: stated that he has 31 years of service with the City. He has only missed 8 Falcons home games. He sponsors trips to North Carolina and New Orleans for Falcons games. The Atlanta Falcons has improved his quality of life. All seventeen members of his family are season tickets holders. Not supporting them is like not supporting the civil rights leaders. The Falcons are a child of Atlanta and we need to pay child support.

Lena Reid Morrow: stated that she has watched this area grow and she is in support of the new stadium.

Mr. Donald Williams: stated that he is a resident of Atlanta and he is in support of the stadium. We need the ability to compete for the Super Bowl, etc. Our businesses will strive from the new stadium.

Ms. Deloris Williams: stated that she is in support of the new stadium and it will provide many jobs. She is a Grady Baby. This will beautify the neighborhood as well.

Rev. Fletcher: stated that nothing is free. \$200 million dollars will come from somewhere. Vine City and English Avenue got stuck with Walmart, etc. We are tired of having things stuffed down our throats. This is about murders, etc. going on near the stadium. Our voices have not been heard. He has been at the table for two years discussing this plan.

Mr. Luner: stated that Arthur Blank network is worth \$1.4 billion dollars and the Falcons are worth \$837 million dollars. How can you represent the people in Vine City if you are not staying there? I am not afraid of you or fear you. In December 2012 Arthur Blank stated that we view this as a permanent solution for the people in the community.

Mr. Matthew L. Kyler: stated that the stadium is important to help the neighborhoods. The Hotel/Motel tax has always been to help the stadium.

Mr. Jim Synder: stated that he has a business in Castleberry Hills. We were there before the Dome and the Olympics. If it does go through the community has to be helped. You have a neighborhood that has revitalized itself. What will happen with the land that surrounds Friendship Baptist Church? He is concerned about Vine City and English Avenue as well because the first time nothing was done for them. There are surcharges on the tickets that suppose to go to the community. Mr. Blank needs to make sure it works for the community as well as the falcons.

Mr. Jerry Myer Jackson, Jr.: stated that Atlanta is “the everything” in the southeastern. He is for the big stadium, but a lot of the promises are stretching when it comes to the neighborhood. His concern is water, but he hopes the new design works. The Hotel/Motel Tax could be used for water woes. That’s a lot on the people of Atlanta especially the low income residents. We may be taking too much money from the Hotel/Motel Tax.

Mr. Glenn Wrightson: stated that there are concerns. We have a football stadium. There is a \$100 million dollars worth of debt that has not been repaid and it is due in 2020. The City receives about \$12 million dollars that they would have to forego to the new debt. We have hit the maximum tax rate.

Mr. Al Bartell: stated that there have been a lot of public relations. There has been communications, but the Mayor has not submitted a reliable public strategy to the City. We need a feasibility study that has the data, etc. This is a government structure for our City. The neighborhoods need to be included. When will it be communicated to the 75 neighborhoods and 26 NPUs? When will it be submitted to the Committees? The communities deserve better.

Mr. Kirim Aziz Allah: stated that he grew up in Atlanta. He is a part of the historic Westside community. He is a business man and a social worker. His community has been destroyed, where he grew up on Fair Street. It is rough being a black man in America.

Mr. Scott Moran: stated that he is from Castleberry Hills. If a new stadium is constructed, the neighborhoods need to be heard. We want to work with them. There are no do overs for a billion dollar mistake. We encourage you to work with the impacted neighborhoods. What will the legacy be for Atlanta?

Mr. W.L. Cottrell: stated that you have been good neighbors. He is one of the preachers that jumped on Mayor Young because they were going to build a Dome without the community input. We got \$8 million dollars from the Trust Fund. What happened to the \$2.5 million dollars that the City promised 24 years ago? He hopes that you had given it and we just didn’t see it. The next time the Dome gives money, make sure the City matches it.

Mother Moore: stated that she lives at 554 Oliver Street. She is an active member of the English Avenue Development Corporation. She is proud to be part of the coalition. Her concern is the NPU statement and litigation. The impact on churches will be noise, loss economy, growth of church is limited, buffers such as trees, parking decks, traffic patterns. You need to coordinate with the churches. Tailgating should be north of the railroad tracks.

Continuing, Chairperson Moore stated that Council President Mitchell is having a meeting with Councilmembers to see how we want to move forward. We do not have any legislation before us. She then stated that nothing would happen until there is a meeting with us.

Ms. Tracy Bates: of English Avenue and she is the executive director of the English Avenue coalition. You should think of the community. You should consider ways to protect the residential community. There are ways that this can be done from the funds generated. We want co-branding opportunities. We don't want to be gentrified with over parking. We want to make sure that we can benefit. We want to promote English Avenue. We need a Benefits agreement before any legislation is introduced.

Mr. Vincent Jones: stated that he was born in English Avenue and is president of the association. We have an idea of what we should have for our community. We need to put together an agreement. He has met with Castleberry Hills and we are all in this together. We want the same kind of information given to our community leaders.

Ms. Heather Alhadeff: stated that she has worked with the City and know the balancing acts. We can get more and it could be better. Turn the conversation away from the negative. We want to emphasize the investment not just for the stadium itself. Please stand up for the City and a better design.

Mr. Chioke Perry: stated that he believes in bureaucracy. He would like to see someone lay out the whole things. We need what is best for Atlanta. Be more inclusive of the public. Stop letting the State drop stuff off on us.

Mr. Calvin Lockwood: stated that he is a board member of the ZRB for the City. He is here to support Vine City, English Avenue and Castleberry Hills.

Ms. Lyn Graybill: stated that she lives in Castleberry Hills and she oppose to public dollars for a new stadium. When the old Dome is paid off, lobby for more responsibility. She believes in taxing and spending for improvement of our neighborhoods. The best interest of the City is not being represented. There are stadiums that are fully funded by private money. When there are public dollars there should be a Referendum.

Mr. Greg Hawthorne: stated that he is with the Vine City Association. He is in support of the stadium. In 1988 the City gave the hotel motel tax and it was amended to the Community Trust Fund. The funds will provide over \$200 million dollars.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: stated that she has had good dialogue and conversations. As the NPU Chair she has to know about agreements that are executed. We want our benefits in writing and executed. She wants us to continue to work together. Chairperson Moore stated that the Executive Branch will handle the negotiations and then it is brought to Council. That plea needs to be with the Mayor's Office.

Mr. Mike Winey: stated that he is a big football fan, but not an idiot. There is no other word for using a third of a billion dollars for entertainment. How can you sleep at night to use public money for something that will not improve the quality of life? These funds need to be

put to good use for the communities. We have a stadium. Let Mr. Blank build what he wants with his own money. A lot of people are thinking here that this is a done deal. Do what we elected you to do, serving the public good. Don't serve the people with power and money.

Dr. Steven Lee: stated that he is in support of the new stadium. He supports the businesses along the MLK corridor. This would be a great deal of money to their businesses. He has a non-profit organization and the Georgia Dome this year has put in \$1.2 million dollars that benefits his non-profit. It allows us an opportunity to raise money. He sees a business man putting in his own money and the City puts in \$200 million dollars. The Georgia Dome needs a lot of repairs, which would be around \$300 million dollars. This new stadium will create jobs.

Mr. Paul Michaels: stated that he has concerns with the gypsy lots. Nobody is regulating them. The City is not doing anything about this rip off. They should have a business license and have a normal parking lot. This is where the tailgating is happening as well.

Mr. Peter Jacobs: stated that he has concerned about the construction of the stadium.

Ms. Debra Scott: stated that the history where we come together when there is hardship. There is a solution to a lot of this. Auburn Avenue has been divided. Buttermilk Bottom has gone by the wayside. The passion from the people is that they have seen it happen before and gotten a bad deal. We know that you are not responsible, but hold the people accountable. The people want to benefit from the jobs, etc. The money belongs to the public.

Mr. Baker Owens: stated that the NFL is the richest sports league on the planet. The new stadium will be funded by Atlanta residents and used by the rich and super rich who can afford to go to the games. The infrastructure costs have not been heard. What about water and sewer upgrades. The Dome was built in the 1990s. The current Dome already supplies jobs.

Ms. Molly Reid Wu: stated that she suggests that Atlanta dump the debt and save the Dome. We could do a lot of good with \$200 million dollars. Take this money and expand MARTA. Give a free breeze card for three free rides. Expand the HOPE scholarship. Pick a good organization and give them \$1 million dollars each to build houses, etc. Give free tickets to the Atlanta residents.

Mr. Byron Amos: stated that he stays across the street from the Dome. He is in support of the Dome. We are talking about the future of this City. If we don't support it, will they leave, we don't know. We keep finding ourselves in country small town conversations. The Blank organizations have put millions in our schools, grants, etc. If you ever come into our neighborhood you would know what they do.

Mr. Lamser Dixon: stated that he is not an Atlanta native, but he stays here now and he invests in the City. What attracts people to a City is progress. It is not easy to get around on transportation in Atlanta. Think about what is best for right now. Is it something that Atlanta needs right now.

Ms. Edith Latipo: stated that promises were never met at the first Dome. Who holds the deed to the property? She was told it was Model Cities for Housing Development. Is Atlanta a managing agency for the property? Does the authority have a charter or agreement for the renters of the property? Is there an interagency agreement? Are there any provisions for jobs, housing, etc.? Has the agreement been made public? She wants to know what is being paying for. If it is Model Cities they do not have to pay for the land, but just lease it. What is the return on the investment?

Ms. Cheryl McAfee: stated that she is in favor of the new stadium and wants the Council to always respect the communities. Please consider participation of businesses and communities. We want community engagement. The promises made should be valid. The communities input are legitimate.

Ms. Katrina Taylor-Parks: Mayor's Office Deputy Chief of Staff thanked everyone for coming out and we have someone taking notes. The report given to Council will be public. Chairperson Moore asked about public engagements and community benefits as well as minority and female participation. Ms. Taylor-Parks responded that we will address the concerns in a timely fashion and it will be wrapped up very soon. Chairperson Moore stated what comes to Council should include all of these areas. We as Council will find ourselves to vote on an already negotiated deal. Councilmember Bond stated that it seems that there is a fundamental issue with what is funded with public funds. We want a chart with the public facilities with how they were funded to educate the public along with the history. Include the paragraph with the State Law to understand what process will take place. Phillips Arena used the Car Rental Tax. He also wants to see a community benefits agreement. You should also designate a person of contact. Ms. Taylor-Parks responded that we will get the information to Council and make it public at least by Friday. Councilmember Winslow stated that Councilmember Young is watching this on TV.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Beard, CFO
Secretary

Charlene Parker
Recording Secretary

"The Department of Finance... because customer service is important to us."